

COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE & ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

3:30pm – 5:00pm

ADMIN 345

MINUTES OF MEETING

Pursuant to call, the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom met at 3:30pm on December 13, 2023. Chair Jayson Beaster-Jones presiding.

I. Chair's Report – Jayson Beaster-Jones**A. [DivCo Updates](#) (November 30)**

The Chancellor has been apprised of the general frustrations on campus. In order to address the financial concerns, a task force of faculty and administration has been created. The Financial Management and Reporting Task Force has convened and met a couple of times, however scheduling has been difficult. The task force meets weekly and is looking to issue a report to the Chancellor and Provost soon. Additionally, the task force will be creating working groups to create metrics and to help address the financial issues on campus.

There are two working groups for the temporary staffing budget. Both of the groups consist of a mix of both faculty and administration. The TAS budget manages finances around TAs and Unit 18 Lecturers. The goals of these working groups will be to reevaluate what should be in the TAS budget and what student hour allocations should be on a school by school basis. There appears to be some discussion about whether the TAS budget can sufficiently meet the university's needs, but that has yet to be seen.

DivCo reviewed a draft of the SSHA restructuring proposal. The draft should formally be available to the rest of campus by January 15, 2024. With the proposal as it is, the Dean is proposing to shift SSHA into three divisions. There is an alternative plan to split SSHA into two divisions rather than three, which would lead to the creation of a more traditional Management School. At this time, it is unclear if FWAF will be asked to opine on the proposal in the future. Members discussed the connection between SSHA's restructuring proposal and staff hiring within the School. Chair Beaster-Jones noted that in a conversation with Interim EVC/P Zatz, she said she had approved of seven lines for SSHA already, however none of them have been hired yet. It was noted that the SSHA Dean may be waiting for the restructuring model to be in place before hiring to ensure the proper needs of the School.

Action: FWAF analyst will add SSHA hiring to January FWAF agenda.

B. Spring 2024 Meeting Schedule**C. Update on December 11 Meeting with Administrative Leadership**

[FWAF's memo](#) was endorsed by the Senate Chair and the Vice-Chair and was transmitted to the Chancellor and the Interim EVC/P on December 6. Chair Beaster-Jones discussed the memo with Interim EVC/P and Senate leads on December 11.

Chair Beaster-Jones met with Interim EVC/P Zatz on December 11. She echoed the

Chancellor and mentioned that the administration is working to address the financial concerns. She also mentioned that she had released lines in terms of staffing needs. Additionally, Interim EVC/P Zatz was not sure how healthcare expenses are determined, but said she would look into it.

II. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. [November 15 draft Meeting Minutes](#)

Action: Today's agenda and November 15 meeting minutes were approved as presented. The Senate website will be updated accordingly.

III. Systemwide Updates

- A. [UCFW Updates](#) (November 17 and December 8) – Jayson Beaster Jones and Kyle Dodson
The December 8 Chair's announcements included:
 - President Drake is creating a Presidential Task Force on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.
 - The increase in health insurance costs was addressed and it was noted that increases were largely due to risk.
 - There is a possibility of an Oracle task force. Some UC campuses are opting out of using Oracle and some are delaying deployment.
 - The UC system is pushing for online education and investing more resources in UC Online.

There may be a faculty salary increase coming soon. It will not be in the form of an off-scale but will hopefully offset healthcare increases.

The UC is phasing out the UC Retirement at Your Service (UCRAYS) website and will be moving to a new updated website. As of December 15, UCRAYS will no longer be used. There was a lot of discussion around the design of the new site and how a variety of people with differing levels of internet skills will be able to access the new webpage. Additional retirement topics addressed were related to past employees not receiving their pension checks in addition to retirees experiencing issues accessing their retirement healthcare benefits.

- B. [UCAF Updates](#) (November 30) – David Jennings
UCAF has fewer meeting hours than other systemwide committees and also does not have a seat on Academic Council. Because UCAF members believed there were a lot of Academic Freedom issues to discuss, they requested to meet more often. Some of the additional meeting hours were approved and some were not. The next UCAF meeting is on Tuesday, December 19, 2023.

UCAF held a consultation with the Academic Senate Chair and Vice-Chair. A few items of noted concern that were discussed in the consultation were:

- The President's viewpoint neutrality statement.
- The push for UC Online.
- Efforts to allow transfer students admission to any UC of their choice.

UCAF decided to oppose the revisions to Senate Bylaw 55 which would give Teaching Professors equitable voting rights in their departments. Some UCAF members believed the revisions would

potentially violate the Academic Freedom of the rest of the faculty. Chair Beaster-Jones noted that the Division Council voted in favor of the revisions to Senate Bylaw 55 and other campuses have shown support for the revisions as well. In addition, it was noted that since UCAF does not have a seat on Academic Council, they will not be eligible to vote on this item.

Members discussed the importance of Academic Freedom as it applies to UC employees who are not Senate faculty.

Action: Members are invited to send items for Member Jennings to bring forward at the next UCAF meeting on Tuesday, December 19.

IV. Consultation with Pranathi Dasari, Research Administrator

Pranathi Dasari is a Research Administrator at UC Merced with experience in financial reporting in the Oracle financial system. At her previous institution, she worked with the Oracle financial system for approximately eight years and has worked for UC Merced for the past five months.

Chair Beaster-Jones inquired if the back end of the Oracle financial system was the same at UC Merced as it was at other institutions Ms. Dasari had worked for. She confirmed that it was the same.

Ms. Dasari noted that she has had a positive experience working at UC Merced. She also noted that there are challenges when transitioning from Legacy to Oracle as their end reports are different. Also, not all UC Merced employees have access to both Legacy and Oracle reports. Some employees only have access to the new Oracle reports and cannot look back at historical data. Additionally, Ms. Dasari noted that at her previous institution, it took a considerable amount of time, approximately four to five years, for data to be standardized during the transition to Oracle. Moreover, it took one to two years for her and her PIs to have a thorough understanding of the reports that were being generated through Oracle. She added that the transition could have been smoother at her previous institution if the management had consulted more with the end users to seek their needs instead of assuming the transition would be seamless.

Ms. Dasari shared a template of a summary report/financial statement and explained its different line items to the committee.

One additional challenge that Ms. Dasari shared with the committee was related to being a remote worker. She noted that face to face interactions are beneficial, especially when going over reports with PIs.

After the guest left, the committee briefly discussed the types of reports that they receive from Oracle. Members noted that they either receive a report similar to the one Ms. Dasari showed the committee or they receive ledgers in Microsoft Excel. The committee also discussed the challenges in moving towards a centralized online workforce. At times, it is hard for staff to know the specific needs of faculty without regular interactions.

V. [MCS Instructional Budget Memo](#) – All

The Management of Complex Systems (MCS) Department sent a memo to Senate leadership regarding challenges with the implementation of the new instructional budget model.

Both FWAF and CAPRA have been asked to review the memo and respond.

On November 22 CAPRA issued a response, available [here](#).

Members reviewed CAPRA's response and agreed with its contents. FWAF members decided to formulate a supportive response to the MCS memo.

Action: FWAF analyst will draft a memo reflecting today's comments and circulate a draft to the committee.

VI. Systemwide Review Items

A. [Presidential Policy BFB-BUS-46 Use of Vehicles & Driver Authorization](#)

The policy applies to the use of any UC vehicle (owned or leased) and any personal vehicle used in the course of UC business.

This policy was distributed for systemwide review in November 2018, but was not finalized. 2018-2019 Senate comments from that review are available [here](#) (UCM's comments are on pp 7-14). Comments from that review have been incorporated into this proposed draft.

Key revisions:

- Change policy name from "Use of University Vehicles" to "Use of Vehicles and Driver Authorization".
- Expanded policy summary and definitions.
- Inclusion of the CA Department of Motor Vehicles Negligent Operator Treatment System (NOTS) as a standard for eligibility to drive on behalf of the University.
- Implementation will apply to all drivers on University business – not solely employees.
- Establishment of Vehicle Collision Review Committees to review collisions, determine preventability, and promote driver safety awareness.
- Establishment of guidelines for drivers involved in preventable collisions including training, suspension, and potential revocation of driving privileges.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair **by 5:00pm Tuesday, January 16, 2024.**

FWAF members discussed the revisions of this review item and decided to decline to opine.

Action: FWAF analyst will notify the Senate Chair that FWAF declined to opine.

B. [Interim Report of the Academic Planning Council \(APC\) Working Group on the Future of Doctoral Education](#) at the University of California

The APC Working Group is a joint administration/Senate working group that was appointed in the summer of 2023 to advise the University community on the future of graduate education. It is co-chaired by UCSB Senate Division Chair Susannah Scott and UCI Dean of Graduate Studies Gillian Hayes.

Comments are due to the Senate Chair **by Monday, January 22, 2024.**

Members discussed the contents of the report and noted that one important aspect of the report includes reducing the time to graduation for graduate students. Chair Beaster-Jones emphasized being diligent in the review of this item.

Action: Chair Beaster-Jones and Member Nowadnick will serve as lead reviewers. They will circulate their comments via email by Monday, January 15. FWAF analyst will include comments in the January FWAF agenda.

C. [Proposed revisions to Academic Personnel Manual \(APM\) – Section 285, Lecturers with Security of Employment Series](#)

The policy includes the following key revisions:

- Revised name of “Lecturer with Security of Employment (LSOE) series and ranks to “Professors of Teaching”
- Removal of Appendix A

FWAF is a Lead Reviewer

Comments are due to Senate Chair **by 5:00pm, Friday, February 2, 2024.**

Member Jennings noted that a reason for the change is that there is confusion between the LSOE and Professor of Teaching titles. People do not realize that they are synonymous titles. Additionally, people often confuse LSOE for Unit 18 Lecturer as both titles use the word Lecturer.

Action: Vice-Chair Ma and Member Jennings will serve as lead reviewers. They will circulate their comments via email by Monday, January 15. FWAF analyst will include comments in the January FWAF agenda.

VII. Other Business

Members raised the issue of the lack of transparency from Administrative leadership regarding new faculty hiring and how lines are being decided upon by the Provost. Chair Beaster-Jones noted that this is related to an issue being discussed in DivCo regarding the number of vacant lines there are across the university that the campus has not rehired. The committee agreed that they would like to request transparency regarding this issue.

Action: Add request for budget transparency in the release of future lines as a future agenda item. Invite Vice Chancellor CFO Kurt Schnier and Interim EVC/P Marjorie Zatz. Members are invited to prepare questions for their visit.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00pm.

Attest: Jayson Beaster-Jones, FWAF Chair